

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
July 17, 2013 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: David Bird, Chair
Dorsey Fiske
Josephine Moore
Florence Smith
Vera Worthy

Members Absent: Joe DiAngelo
Jonathan Justice
Susan Marinelli

Also Present: Debbie Pfeil, Senior Planner, URS
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Inspector/Fire Marshal

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. Roll call followed.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the 6/24/13 meeting as distributed. Motion approved. The minutes of the 5/20/13 meeting are deferred until the next meeting.

Delmarva Power and Light Co. – Construction of expansion of electric substation at 1220 Wilmington Road – parcel 21-004.00-099 – Lisa Goodman, Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor is representing Delmarva. Exhibits and site plan was distributed to Commissioners. City Code says that substations are permitted in any zoning designation as long as there is a specific use contained. This substation has been in existence since 1935, before the zoning requirements, making it a pre-existing use. Delmarva needs to add equipment within the existing substation for reliability purposes. The applicant seeks a special use permit that Code requires.

The parcel is 18.7 acres and is zoned R-2 and OSR. It is surrounded by a wooded buffer. Tony Boulos, Substation Engineer for the New Castle Region of Delmarva described the equipment to be added as a voltage control device to help maintain system stability through the transmission system. It simply upgrades reliability of equipment. The height of the equipment is within Code. A low-noise device (60 decibels and below) is being purchased. There is a fence around the perimeter, an active motion camera in the facility, and barbed wire along the top of the fence. Mr. Bill Bailey, scientist and consultant with Exponet, addressed questions pertaining to emission levels. He confirmed that the unit meets emission level guidelines.

By way of letter, City Planner Marian Hull recommends a favorable review to go to the Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Fiske made a motion to recommend a special exception for the entire electrical substation to continue the existing use and permit the expansion of the existing substation. Ms. Worthy seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Report on Parking Study – Dr. Joanne Viola summarized the group's progress to date. They are focusing on issues that were identified as important on the parking survey. Issues were separated into long-range and short-range task groups. Volunteer help is welcome, particularly with clerical work. The group's timeline will be published in the *New Castle Weekly* and the City's website.

Waterfront Flood Study Update – The study is moving forward. DNREC conducted a meeting at 5:30 p.m. tonight to update the status of the City's dikes. Approvals have been secured for the Gambacorta and Buttonwood dikes and bids are out for the Broad Creek dike. The flood study will take effect in 2014-15 and will impact flood insurance rates. According to Mr. Bergstrom the dikes will be finished prior to the 2014-15 new evaluation to allow the City to get into the federal flood insurance program. He urged residents to look at the new flood maps. Ms. Pfeil said some coastal areas in Delaware are contesting the new maps and suggested residents look at them.

Budget – Funding for the Comprehensive Plan Update will be split between the next two years.

New Business – The multi-use trail from Frenchtown Road to Delaware Street is anticipated to begin in fall 2013; anticipated completion date to be determined. The DelDOT contact person is Jeff Niezgoda.

Commissioners' Comments

Ms. Fiske expressed concern with the recent railroad accident in Canada. Mr. Bergstrom said that Norfolk Southern would be putting in new 70 ft. long pieces of track at the crossing on Route 9 (Baldt Avenue/Trolley Barn) that will necessitate the closing of the roadway during the week of 7/29/13. This is part of the process to update the railroad tracks to support the increased rail traffic from the refinery complex. Commissioners were concerned with the lack of communication to the public about the closing.

Comments from the Public – None.

Next Meeting & Adjournment – The next meeting is scheduled for 8/26/13 at 6:30 p.m. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer